



THIS 1898 photo is taken from the hill above the present site of Crown Zellerbach's Central Research laboratories (where houses at left center are situated). Railway trestle for the mill is seen running through the photo center.

Early commerce, industry thrived

It was on Sept. 10, 1883, that the original Camas townsite was laid out by the LaCamas Colony Co., founders of the paper mill. Only two weeks before the platting of the town the first dam on Lackamas Lake had been completed and 50 men had begun work constructing the mill.

Camas, or LaCamas as it was then called, was already a flourishing community, for businessmen had sensed the area was to become one of the most progressive small cities in the state.

A.E. MacMaster, a native of Scotland, constructed the first store in Camas. Actually, he had made his first sale the day he landed with merchandise from a

steamer in mid-September, 1883. His Pioneer store, with a lodge hall on the second floor, was a landmark in the city for years. It stood where the paper mill machine shop is now located.

In the spring of 1884, a crew of 30 Chinese laborers went to work digging the mill ditch while other workmen kept working on the mill itself.

On Aug. 7, 1884, the Vancouver Independent, a weekly paper, observed: "The paper mill is up to the third story. Demand for lumber is so great the sawmill cannot furnish it.....the ditch that will furnish water will be cut through in a few days."

Although the sawmill on the lake was turning out 30,000 feet of lumber a day, it couldn't keep up with construction demands in the booming town. In December, 1884, the first addition, Cowan's, was made to the original LaCamas townsite. It was located on the first bench above the town proper and contained seven homes when platted.

Another industry, flour, came to Camas the following year, when in November, O.C. Grove opened a flouring mill four stories high.

By the summer of 1884 LaCamas was big enough to support two hotels. The Mountain House

accommodated 25 guests while the LaCamas took care of 40 mill workers and townspeople.

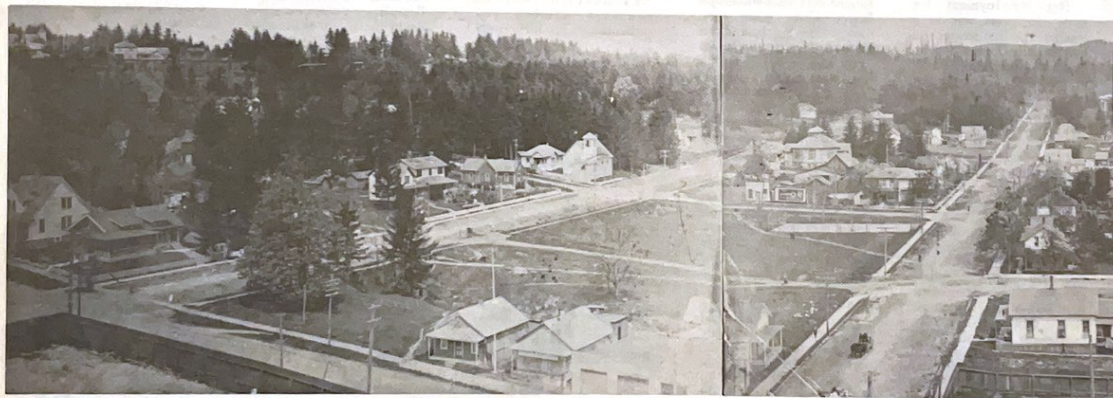
In 1889, Washington territory was transformed to Washington state. By this time Camas had grown, in six short years, to a flourishing town of 1,000 population. The paper mill had become the largest in the Columbia river area and was employing 200 men.

According to a magazine article of the time:

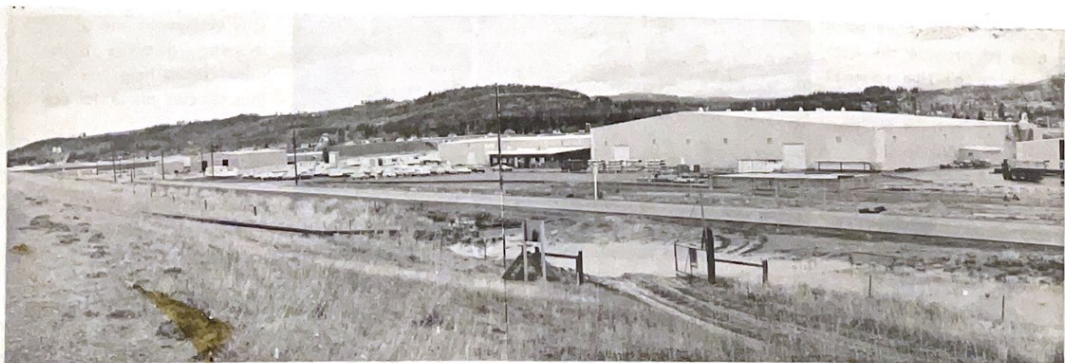
"They have good homes in a prosperous community and all the advantages of schools and churches and other adjuncts of civilization that any town of its size can supply. Communication with

Portland and all river points is had by means of boats which ply at convenient intervals, and just across the Columbia River lies the main line of the Oregon Railway and Navigation Co...."

"In appearance LaCamas is not at all like a frontier settlement. It is a live, modern town. Its busy factories and shops, its large mercantile interests, the well-kept streets and comfortable residences and business blocks give it an air of prosperity. The people enjoy life and prosecute their business with energy. It is a good place for people seeking the investment of capital in safe and paying enterprises."



By 1915, Camas had grown right along with the paper mill. A horse and buggy, in the left panel, is a striking contrast to what was soon to dominate the streets of Camas: cars. (In the right hand page, center, is one of the town's first Model T Fords.) Notable landmarks include the First Christian Church (built 1912) and shown in the center of the left hand page. Division Street extended all the way to the Columbia River in those days. The Presbyterian Church is on the hill at the extreme left.



THE PORT OF CAMAS-WASHOUGAL has grown immensely in the past eight years, after laying dormant for decades. The Bonneville Steel Yard was the first tenant in the park, and was soon followed by other manufacturing firms. The initial 100-acre industrial park is now almost filled, and the port recently

purchased another 50 acres adjacent to the existing park for future expansion. The port has brought tax dollars and added employment to the area because of its development of the industrial park.